1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949. ND12 Nahane ND12

that name who lay ill in the settlement and to whom they were humorously comparing the discarded belongings. The myths and folktales show no evidence that the aged were ever glorified. On the contrary, they idealized the stamina and ingenuity of youth while reflecting pity and sympathy for the old and helpless.[86] Sixteen year old Carl Leonard said: "I don't want to be old man. I want to be young man as long as I live. Old man, they say, hard time. Nobody carry around your things. That's why old no good. Young man always do something. I don't mind to be old, but not too old. Too old no good. Someplace you want to go, you can't go."

Anxiety is the principal emotional component with which the individual adjusts to growing old. While the aging person is resigned to the inevitability of his increasing debility, he nevertheless reacts to it as a threat for which he realizes there are no social bulwarks. There is no compensation for old age in Kaska society which takes the place of initiative in hunting and trapping. When the individual feels his capacity to endure the effort of these activities being reduced, he realizes, especially if he is a man, that from now on his self-sufficiency and independence will be seriously limited. Since the man is the principal economic provider of the Kaska family, old age is far more anxiety provoking to the male than to the female. The solidarity of women, their warmer interpersonal ties, and a woman's training for a relatively dependent status all assist in providing her with greater emotional security in age than is afforded the man. The latter, trained for the role of independent provider and taught to rely on his powers of endurance, finds it difficult to relax. His insecurity is starker and less relieved.

The manifest adjustments to old age are found first in the reduction of a person's activities. A man will curtail his trapping activities, giving the more remote portions of his territory to sons-in-law or younger brothers. He may continue to hunt with a group or go out alone for a day, but extended hunting trips are abandoned and more of the old man's time comes to be spent idling around the camp or house. Increasing criticism of youth also appears to mark the male's transition to a new segment of the life cycle. A woman too restricts her activities with age, although she has long been used to receiving assistance in household activities from daughters. For a long time she may continue to sew, apportion food, and maintain a firm control of household activities. Between husband and wife signs appear of emotional ties becoming more tightly knit. Each spouse expresses concern with the other's health. The woman worries if her husband leaves the camp and remains away too long. In both sexes there is more illness. Older men indulge in reiterated descriptions of physical symptoms. Such illness further interferes with the performance of customary duties, while the symptoms are sometimes used as rationalizations for curtailed activity. With the onset of menopause, some women also complain of headache, abdominal pains, and general despondency.

As long as an old person avoids senility and retains an interest in his household, family, and friends, he is not treated differently from other adults. With senility, however, helplessness and dependence become more extreme; the individual is left more alone, is not consulted regarding decisions, and may even be neglected.

In Old Man's camp lived a partly senile old woman. Old Metla, who was being cared for

[86] See Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

by her daughter, Lady Sun, and a foster son, Nitla. With Lady Sun most of the time was her youngest son, Donald. From these relatives Metla received a minimum of care and little compassion. Frequently her fire was permitted to go out and rekindled only after her prolonged moaning and shrieking brought attention. Nitla complained several times of being unable to sleep at night or of being awakened by Old Metla's demands for fire. Old Man too complained of being kept awake by the sick woman's moaning. Because of her lice and uncleanliness, all except Metla's daughter were reluctant to come into contact with the old woman, although on the boat journey to Old Man's place illness and debility made it practically impossible for her to climb into the vessel unassisted. On the boat she sat isolated from the other travelers and most of the time crouched in the prow near the dogs. Early in October everyone in camp left on a hunting trip and abandoned the old woman in camp with only the ethnographer's family. According to Nitla, they went on the hunt only after feeling sure that Old Metla's health was improved, and that she was able to do small things for herself. Four or five days' supply of wood was left, but little food other than sugar, oatmeal, and flour. During this period the old woman once more relapsed into serious illness (perhaps because of too liberally helping herself to sugar, for which she had an inordinate fondness) and was unable to keep her fire going. The wood also became exhausted. Among the last people to return from the hunt was Metla's daughter.

Youth shows little sympathy with the debilities and weaknesses of old age. No courtesies are developed toward the old. So long as a camp contains food, however, a helpless old person will not be allowed to starve. The aged are also entitled to rations provided by the Indian Affairs Branch. Unless there are particularly devoted children, however, it is likely that the standard of living of the very old must go below that of the average member of the society.

Sickness[17]

Sickness is apt to strike at any point along the life cycle and its classification following old age is solely a matter of convention. Here we will deal with those aspects of illness which affect the person's interpersonal relations. The Kaska Indian, with rare reprieves, is forced to live in close association with illness, either his own or that of some member of his family. While all illness is not necessarily serious, concern with symptoms occupies a large portion of the adult's attention. Young people, in contrast, often underestimate the seriousness of sickness.

Little concern with the implications of sickness for the future is manifested, even by those men who are most concerned with their symptoms. Yet incapacitation through illness may have serious economic consequence. Illness in the fall, for example, can prevent hunting and frustrate the accumulation of meat for the winter. If serious ill health occurs in the winter it hinders trapping. The following spring, with insufficient fur, a man can do little more than pay off the credit extended to him the previous year before beginning to run up a new and higher debt. Several men were caught in this vicious circle.

The economic burden resulting from a man's sickness must, in greatest part, be borne

[17] Field work in connection with sickness was greatly aided by the use of Ackerknecht's *On the Collecting of Data Concerning Primitive Medicine* (1942). For other information concerning time of sickness and medicine in Kaska society see below pp. 247-248.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1954 ND12 Nahane ND12

Dease River
Kechika River

5. A wife's or husband's parents are merged with grandparents.

6. SoWi is classified with granddaughter but DaSu is terminologically differentiated. 601

7. There are two grandchildren terms applied according to sex and extended as indicated in (5) and (6) above.

The extension of bifurcate merging terminology to group Da and BrDa represents a difference between Dease River and Upper Liard River kinship usage that may indicate longer matrilocal residence and matrilineal descent in the former area.[8] 171

Clear evidence of joking between grandparents and grandchildren could not be obtained for the Kistagotena. The informant, himself an elderly man, stressed that grandparents exercised an educative and disciplinary role over grandchildren. A boy avoided his real or classificatory sisters after he as well as they had reached puberty. Prior to that time they played together freely. A sister continued to sew moccasins and other clothing for her brother as long as he remained in his parents' household. Following marriage she exchanged gifts with her brother's wife. Two Dease River informants manifested inexplicable reluctance to speak of cross-cousin marriage but asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage was finally admitted, together with the fact that these relatives remained on terms of easy familiarity even if they did not wed. A man's mother-in-law demanded respect and avoidance of undue intimacy. However the pair of relatives were permitted to engage in necessary conversation and could freely eat together. A son-in-law was expected to "feed" his father-in-law, especially when the latter became too old to hunt. A man joked freely with his wife's sister and brother's wife. The treatment of orphans and, perhaps, the fantasies of these unhappy children are reflected in "The Story of the Water-Man" related by Tait.[9] In this folk tale an orphaned boy who had been harshly treated succeeds in doing what nobody else had managed to achieve, breaking the Water Man's penis. The youth allows his uncle to gain credit for the feat. Eventually the uncle is killed, whereupon the boy overcomes Water Man, is made "chief" by the people, and takes his uncle's older wife as his own. He refuses to have anything to do with her younger co-wife. Psychoanalytically minded readers will readily discern the Oedipus situation in this folktale. 602 [582] 736 538

Friendship patterns remain to be discussed. Two men might informally institute a close friendship, in which they would hunt and travel together. They addressed each other sedi'ate ("just like one"), undoubtedly a cognate of the husband term. 572

Kechika River. Although informants showed no readiness to classify the Kechika (Muddy) people apart from the Dease River Indians, a number of differences in kin terminology between the two areas suggest that we isolate the former region at this point for special consideration. The differences are particularly interesting because they reflect a social structure which has not fully assimilated matrilineal, exogamous society organization. Such an interpretation coincides with the fact that the Muddy River is relatively peripheral to the area of intensive unilinear organization, the Northwest Coast. The kin terms collected from Mark Mulgoot, our Muddy River informant, follow. 601 171

[8] Murdock, *Social Structure* (1949), 149.

[9] Tait, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 480-481.